

Important Information Regarding the New Smokefree Public Place and Workplace Law

What is the Smokefree Public Place and Workplace Law?

The Smokefree Public Place and Workplace Law (the "law") prohibits smoking in public places and workplaces to protect employees and the public from secondhand smoke. Rhode Island is the seventh state in the nation to pass a smokefree workplace law. Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Delaware, Maine and California are already smokefree.

What does the law require me to do?

Beginning March 1, 2005, you may not allow smoking at your establishment by employees or patrons in any indoor spaces. Signs must be posted at every entrance. You must notify present and future employees that your establishment is smokefree.

Do I need to post signs?

Yes. A sign must be clearly posted at every entrance to public places and workplaces where smoking is prohibited. Failure to post signs could result in a civil penalty of up to \$1,000. These signs can be downloaded from <http://www.health.ri.gov/disease/tobacco>. or call 401-222-3293.

Am I allowed to provide a smoking break room for my employees?

No. Smoking is not allowed in any indoor workplace. Should an employer provide an outdoor area, it must physically be separated from the enclosed workplace so as to prevent the migration of smoke into the workplace. The Department of Health recommends that any outdoor smoking area be at least fifty (50) feet from the building.

Can I smoke in my private office?

No.

What if I choose to allow customers or employees to smoke?

As an employer, if you choose to allow smoking in your establishment, you can be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation.

How will the law be enforced?

The owner, manager, operator or any person having control of an indoor area open to the public, food service establishment, bar, or place of employment under this law will post appropriate signage and will inform individuals who are smoking that they are in violation of the law.

Enforcement of the law also will be achieved by a complaint system. Employees and the public may report violations of the law to the Rhode Island Department of Health at 401-222-3293.

How can I file a complaint?

To file a complaint call the Rhode Island Department of Health at 401-222-3293 or go to <http://www.health.ri.gov/disease/tobacco>.

How can I find more information?

For more information call the Rhode Island Department of Health at 401-222-3293 or go to <http://www.health.ri.gov/disease/tobacco>.



Rhode Island Department of Health
Division of Disease Prevention & Control
Tobacco Control Program